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Influencing Art

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ART INFLUENCING



A



B



C

“It is impressed on our minds in infancy that a certain arbitrary symbol indicates an existing fact; if this same association of emblem and reality is reiterated at the preparatory school, insisted upon at college, and pronounced correct at the university; symbol and fact — or supposed fact — becomes so intimately blended that it is extremely difficult to disassociate them, even when reason and personal observation teaches us they have no true relationship.

So it is with the conventional galloping horse; we have become so accustomed to see it in art that it has imperceptibly dominated our understanding, and we think the representation to be unimpeachable, until we throw all our preconceived impressions on one side, and seek the truth by independent observations from Nature herself.”

// Eadweard Muybridge, “The Gallop,” *Animals in Motion*, 1889

In addition to proving the theory of unsupported transit (that all hooves leave the ground), Muybridge’s image changed how artists depicted a horse in motion. Artists had assumed that the horses’ legs were spread apart, akin to jumping. Muybridge’s photo showed all four feet under the body of the horse.

A

Baronet, George Stubbs and George Townly Stubbs, 1794
// Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

B

Occident Trotting at 2:30 Gait, John Koch, ca. 1876.
Gouache with superimposed photograph // Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University; Stanford Family Collections

C

Photograph of thoroughbred bay mare Annie G.
taken by Eadweard Muybridge, ca. 1887 // University of Pennsylvania Archives